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# **N**ine years of persistent conflict. Adaptive enemies. Decentralized operations that push both responsibility and risk to the edge of our operational formations. Decreased resources. Increased mission requirements. Exponential technological change. These factors challenge the Army's ability to execute core learning and training missions and functions for soldiers, leaders and units.

## **Developing Adaptable Soldiers, Leaders and Units to Meet the Challenge of Persistent Conflict**

Two supporting concepts, *The Army Learning Concept for 2015* (ALC 2015) and *The Army Training Concept* (ATC) are designed to achieve these goals. The ALC 2015 addresses individual training and education, and the ATC addresses unit training.

Together these concept documents describe a holistic and integrated Army learning and training environment that develops soldiers, leaders and units with the capability to execute full spectrum operations. The concepts share the central idea of operational adaptability and emphasize the need for realistic, tailored, and adaptable training methodologies and technologies that enhance learning and readiness. Both concepts address the needs of an all-volunteer Army, a generation of soldiers who have grown up in a digital world, and seasoned Army professionals who have experienced multiple deployments and bring a wealth of experience to learning and training.

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## The Army Learning Concept for 2015

The ALC 2015 describes the learning continuum for an individual soldier and leader from initial military training through functional courses and professional military education. The ALC 2015 is the Army's vision to train and educate soldiers and leaders in individual knowledge, skills, attributes and abilities to execute full spectrum operations in an era of persistent conflict. It is learner-centric, uses experience and lifelong learning, and delivers learning at the point of need. The ALC 2015 addresses the need to transform the Army's outdated learning model from one that is course-based and throughput-oriented to one that is relevant and rigorous and focuses on the individual learner. These capabilities are characterized using the mnemonic LEARN.

■ **Learner-centric.** Integrate training, education and experience; tailor learning to individual needs and gaps throughout the soldier's career; and use seasoned Army professionals' experience and education.

■ **Engaging.** Challenge and inspire learners and provide feedback and support from peers and mentors.

■ **Adaptive.** Develop soldiers and leaders who have the cognitive, interpersonal and cultural skills to be adaptive in complex tactical and strategic environments; provide an adaptive learning model that routinely includes feedback from operational forces and development tools to rapidly update curriculum and learning products to be responsive.

■ **Rigorous & relevant.** Establish and maintain rigorous doctrinal and performance standards for soldiers and leaders, and provide soldiers with access to relevant information.

■ **Networked.** Use learning technologies and on-demand content such as search engines and information repositories, and provide delivery systems not bound by "brick and mortar" for learning at the point of need.

Imagine a group of students scheduled for a counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine class. The students come from different Army branches and include other service components and international partners. Each student brings experiences from assignments that range from multiple operational deployments to generating-force staff positions, from direct experience with COIN operations to none at all. Each student is given a pretest on COIN doctrine and, based on his individual results, completes engaging, self-paced modules tailored to build on prior knowledge and fill gaps. Some may test out completely and pursue independent study on advanced topics. Others may require in-

tensive, individualized study of the fundamentals. Once all students master the doctrinal fundamentals, they meet in a small group to solve operationally relevant problems. Each student applies both doctrinal knowledge and unique individual experiences to a realistic, culturally specific, virtual scenario that tests critical-thinking skills and decision-making ability in a risk-free—but rigorous and demanding—learning environment. A facilitator guides the group to discover new insights, and peers learn from each other's experiences and knowledge.

This vignette illustrates some of the key changes in the Army's individual learning model. It differs from today's schoolhouse learning, which frequently focuses on the



*Urban Simulation (UrbanSim) is now being used to conduct exercises for NCO development, officer basic and advanced courses, intermediate level education, and School of Command Preparation at the Combined Arms Center.*

platform lecturer (the "sage on the stage"), by using a blended learning approach that is learner-centric, engaging, tailored, outcome-oriented and technology-enabled. The ALC 2015 fosters competencies essential to building soldiers and leaders who have mastered fundamental tactical and technical skills and are equipped with critical-thinking, problem-solving and communication skills as well as the initiative to be adaptive.

Training and Doctrine Command is migrating from one-size-fits-all platform instruction to a more learner-centric environment that uses new methods and technologies. The School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics at the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., has developed a Learning Continuum 2015 concept that is student-centered. It incorporates self-development, provides institutional instruction and draws upon a learner's operational experience as part of future Captains Career Courses (CCC).

Noncommissioned officers are using structured self-development to master fundamental knowledge before attending resident courses. The Army Career Tracker web

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site will empower soldiers to track and manage their career-long learning goals online.

The CCC at the Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning, Ga., is employing Joint Training Counter-IED Operations Integration Center scenarios to provide relevant operational lessons in a blended learning approach. The Engineer Basic Officer Leader Course and CCC at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., are employing games and simulations to increase relevant, interactive and tailored learning in the classroom.

The Connecting Soldiers to Digital Applications initiative is demonstrating how handheld mobile Internet devices can deliver information to initial entry soldiers when and where needed. The Sustainment Center of Excellence, Fort Lee, Va., has developed 50 mobile applications for classroom “checks on learning” and mobile access to doctrine and technical manual job aids for initial entry, sustainment training and work support. A Patriot Crew Drill game pilot is leveraging a blended learning methodology of tutorials, first-person and multiplayer games for institutional and unit-training requirements.

The ALC 2015 blends rigorous and relevant live learning experiences with technology-enabled instruction without sacrificing standards. Future research and experience will drive decisions about what learning is best delivered by technology and what is best conducted face-to-face or hands-on. Technology allows us to expand the reach of individual learning to soldier/leader locations and employ the same familiar delivery means to units in an integrated training environment that supports both individuals and units.

### The Army Training Concept 2012–2020

*The Army Training Concept* is the Army’s vision for unit training that balances operational and institutional training requirements. It offers adaptability, efficiencies and a broad range of training capabilities to maintain operationally adaptive, ready units in a period of reduced resourcing, persistent conflict and a complex, uncertain operational environment. Currently units at home station are familiar with using separate live, virtual, constructive and gaming technologies to help commanders plan, prepare, execute and assess collective training events. The difference is that the ATC vision is one of an integrated training environment where interconnected live, virtual, and constructive simulations and simulators simulate actual operational communications systems. As this vision becomes reality, training enablers at home and deployed will significantly increase commander options and opportunities for more realistic and rigorous training.



*Soldiers participate in a Virtual BattleSpace 2 (VBS2) simulated call-for-fire at the Battle Command Training Center.*

U.S. Army/Russ Cloy

Imagine a unit commander preparing for the train/ready phase of Army force generation who reviews a proposed exercise training plan and scenario generated by integrated training management software. He adjusts the training plans so that platoon leaders and company commanders will be challenged to act independently and adapt to operational changes. During the training phase, leaders and staffs engage with a mix of live and virtual role players. Meanwhile, company leaders use personal digital devices to review doctrine and provide input to the after action review

(AAR). As part of the AAR, observer-controllers recommend mission essential tasks for the brigade to retrain during a subsequent constructive training event. Later in train/ready, the unit deploys to a combat training center to complete leader-identified training objectives, train full spectrum operations, and improve individual and unit task proficiency by utilizing scenarios that replicate a complex operational environment. Throughout the process,

commanders adjust scenarios to improve realism and complexity by employing live, virtual, constructive and gaming training enablers.

### Fundamental Principles for Unit Training

The Army’s training management principles and tenets will be as important in 2020 as they are today. We must reinforce that, outside of actual operations, developing leaders and training units to conduct full spectrum operations are essential to the Army mission. Leader development and adaptive unit training foster the Army’s ability to effectively employ both lethal and nonlethal means in combined arms maneuver and wide-area security operations.

Following almost a decade of frequent deployments, minimal dwell time and higher-directed training, commanders must “retake” charge of training. Leaders at all levels must plan, prepare, execute, and assess unit training and leader development to ensure that their units train as they will fight. Without sufficient resources and time to train every task, they must train select tasks well and adapt to new and unexpected challenges within the operational environment.

To develop the right environment and train the right tasks, leaders must understand the mission’s operational environment. They must also ensure that soldiers and units master fundamentals before moving to more complex skills while using multi-echelon and concurrent training to conserve resources and create a context for learning.

*Integrated Training Environment (ITE)*. As dwell time increases, leaders will optimize home-station training and depend less on combat training centers to prepare their

units for operations. Training and leader development is migrating from full spectrum operations in a COIN environment to full spectrum operations against a hybrid threat. With the ITE, commanders will be able to more effectively select training tasks to foster leader and unit adaptability. The ITE architecture is the backbone of the ATC. Preparations are in progress to field the ITE at Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Hood, Texas; and Fort Campbell, Ky., in 2012 and then extend ITE to about three active or reserve component installations per year. The intent is to provide tools at the home station so that brigade and subordinate leaders can gain and maintain mission essential task proficiency for designated missions.

The ATC's commander-driven, ITE-enabled training approach provides a responsive training support system that will:

- Use leader skills, know-ledge and behaviors gained through *The Army Learning Concept*.
- Empower commanders and noncommissioned officers to train their units.
- Provide home-station training capabilities to train units to brigade-level mission essential task proficiency for active Army and company-level proficiency for reserve component units.

- Foster synergy between operational, self-development and institutional training.

### A Learning Army—Shared Responsibility

*The Army Capstone Concept* and *The Army Operating Concept* describe many challenges to remain operationally adaptive. *The Army Learning Concept* and *The Army Training Concept* are integral components of the emerging

concepts-to-capability process for this institutional adaptation. Realizing these capability requirements will better enable both individual soldiers and units to learn and adapt at a pace necessary to meet global security challenges. Developing individual and collective competencies in a continuum of learning across a soldier's career and assignments becomes a shared responsibility

between the individual and the leadership of both the generating force and the operating force. The Army's ability to learn and adapt rapidly is an institutional imperative to meet the demands of the 21st-century security environment. ★

The Army Learning Concept (TP 525-8-2) and The Army Training Concept (TP 525-8-3) are available online at <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pamndx.htm>.



Soldiers conduct individual self-paced theater- and culture-specific training at a TRADOC school.

U.S. Army/Russ Cloy

MAJ Matthew Mackey checks version 2 of the mobile Army Training Network 2GO app, just released by the U.S. Army's Combined Arms Center-Training. The updated app—with new search, help and update features—lets you download the training resources you select to your iPad, iPhone or Android mobile device. Download ATN2GO free at <https://atn.army.mil>.



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